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**MOLDOVA**

# CASE STUDY

## New Cattle Raising Techniques Pay Off

### Building a cattle feedlot increases Moldovan farmers' incomes



Farmer-to-Farmer Volunteer Norval Dvorak, left, and Peace Corps Volunteer Ben Tirrell, right, explain to US Ambassador Heather Hodges how they helped the Moldovan village of Dusmani revive its agriculture sector.

***A Farmer-to-Farmer project sparked an agricultural revival in a small Moldovan town, where revenues from beef are expected to top \$27,000 in one year.***

Telling Our Story  
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### Challenge

Rural Moldova was always known for its farmlands, but after the Soviet Union's fall, it lost its agricultural and livestock markets. With rising poverty, many young people went abroad, where jobs were more plentiful, leaving the older generation of farmers struggling to work their land on their own.

### Initiative

Farmers in Dusmani village in northwestern Moldova created the Tersimeda Cooperative to help see them through the crisis. Working together, they farmed the land, purchased equipment and seeds, and sold grain. In 2005, USAID's Farmer-to-Farmer program brought volunteers to Dusmani to help strengthen the cooperative. When Norval Dvorak, an 84-year old retired farmer from Wisconsin, came to Dusmani he realized that the farmers would benefit from a new technique for raising cattle — a US-style feedlot. This would not only boost demand for local grain, but it would also help Moldovan farmers learn farm management techniques, enhance the quality of their goods, and improve their marketing. Dvorak went to Wisconsin to raise money for the project. He then paired up with a Peace Corps volunteer, Ben Tirrell, to complete the project.

### Results

The project sparked a small agricultural revival in Dusmani. Cooperative members renovated Soviet-era barns, purchased 50 more calves, and provided 15 tons of feed to get started. As a result, beef revenues are expected to bring in \$27,000 in the first year, and the cooperative has hired three full-time employees. A few co-op members bought their own calves, and by marketing them through the cooperative, they will fetch a higher price. Moldova's farmers and agriculture experts have been watching the project with great interest. In fact, the agricultural minister, Anatoly Gorodenko, has been following the project and hopes to help other villages replicate the Dusmani model. The Tersimeda Cooperative has shown that despite economic and demographic changes, agricultural and livestock farmers still have a strong future in Moldova.